



DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

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THE CHANCERY

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MEMO

To: All Clergy and Religious in the Diocese of St. Catharines

From: Bishop Gerard Bergie

Date: April 8, 2021

Yesterday, the Premier of Ontario declared a State of Emergency for the Province of Ontario. As of April 8th, 2021, all of Ontario is under a “Stay-at-home order” until at least May 6th.

- For churches, the 15% capacity limit put in place last week is unchanged for all Masses and liturgical celebrations, including weddings and funerals. Funeral attendance is limited to a maximum of 50 people.
- Confirmations scheduled between April 8th and May 6th are postponed. Rescheduling will be discussed with pastors as soon as possible. For the time being, confirmations scheduled between May 7th and May 31st are unchanged.
- First Communion celebrations scheduled in April and until May 6th may proceed. However, if pastors, in consultation with parents and guardians, consider it prudent, these could be rescheduled after the stay-at-home order has ended. Alternatively, First Communion may be celebrated at Sunday Masses, not by classes with fellow students, but by families with candidates attending with their parents/guardians.
- Parishioners are reminded that Bishop Bergie’s dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation, granted on March 16, 2020, is ongoing. All are encouraged to view online/livestream/televised Masses. A listing of diocesan parishes with livestreaming can be found at www.saintcd.com.
- Pastors are to remind parishioners to avoid congregating in or around the church before and after services.
- Provincial authorities announced that they might like to use certain places of worship for vaccination clinics, especially in “hot spot” areas. We have not been contacted about this and will keep you informed if we receive such a request. If a parish is contacted directly about this, please notify the chancery. Any such clinic would be possible in church halls, not in churches.